

Engineering Heritage Australia Bulletin: #6

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The smell of Vegemite – olfactory heritage

The City of Melbourne council has recognised the heritage value of the distinctive odour of Vegemite as part of its description of a Port Melbourne factory where the yeast spread has been long manufactured – see attached OlfactoryHeritage_Vegemite.



Two Heritage Engineering Webinars

In late September and October, Engineering Heritage Sydney will be hosting two webinars with the focus on heritage engineering – the first on Restoration of Locomotive 3801 and the second, on the future of White Bay Power Station, and the conservation of The Abbey.

Restoration of Locomotive 3801 – 23 September 2021

NSW steam locomotive 3801 was overhauled by a largely volunteer workforce between 2009 and 2020, returning to successful main-line heritage operation in 2021.



Throughout the project, it was necessary to maintain a balance between historical trades, current skills, modern equipment and materials in such a way to protect the basic fabric and heritage value of the locomotive. Significant effort was focused to ensure the work remained faithful to the original design drawings and specifications.

This presentation by the overhaul Project Manager Craig Mackey, will describe some of the engineering aspects of the work, with reference to some manufacturing processes no longer employed in commercial engineering.

Following is the link to register for the webinar

<https://portal.engineersaustralia.org.au/event/2021/07/engineering-aspects-restoration-locomotive-3801-38461>

White Bay Power Station and The Abbey – 25 October 2021

White Bay Power Station is a highly recognisable landmark on the foreshore of Sydney Harbour. Since shutting down in 1984 the site has generally remained closed to the public. Now, the state government is undertaking a major programme of conservation works and investigating potential adaptive reuses for the site.



Alex Been is a structural engineer with 20 years' experience in the design and documentation of building and infrastructure projects, and a member of EHS. For the last decade he has provided structural remedial works advice to the owners of the power station site.

The Abbey is an historic home built c1882 by John Young, Sydney Mayor, master builder and engineer. It is a landmark stone building in Gothic Revival style, modelled on a Scottish Manor.



The building fell into disrepair before undergoing major conservation, restoration and adaptive re-use works from 2010 until 2015, when it received the RIAA National Architecture Award for Heritage and the NSW Greenway Award for Heritage Architecture.

Nicholas Joannides of consulting engineers Partridge, has over forty years' experience in structural and remedial engineering. He will discuss his Heritage Engineering structural design advice and detailing for the main residence stabilisation and restoration, as well as the adaptive re-use of the rear stables.

Following is the link to register for the White Bay Power Station and The Abbey webinar:

<https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/event/2021/08/white-bay-power-station-past-present-and-future-38921>

Preserving Australia's engineering heritage

For those who missed it, attached is the piece titled *Preserving Australia's engineering heritage*, in **create digital** of 26 August, about Neil Hogg's appearance at the public hearing into the NSW Government's review of the NSW Heritage Act.

Engineering Heritage Tasmania – an invitation and news

Please join us:

EHTas has only a small membership but is keen to welcome more members, even if you come as refugees from the mainland, or just visitors.

We meet most months on the third Thursday of the month. Presently our normal venue is the Black Buffalo Hotel in North Hobart at 10.30am. Meetings in August, November, Feb and

May are held at the Division's office. Check with us first if you want to come in case we change venues.

The agenda is a committee/general meeting, short informal talk and then lunch at the pub. When the meeting is at the Division's office, the talk tends to be more formal and we are thinking of having a link available to allow other Divisions to view the talk.

We had our elections at the August meeting. The same faces were re-elected: Bob Taaffe (Chair), Bruce Cole (Vice Pres/Secretary) and Ian Cooper and Peter Spratt committee members. There is no point in having a treasurer as we have no money.

Projects:

We have been working with EHWA on the website. EHTas decided to follow the good work that WA has done and has adopted a clone-type version of their website. We believe it is good engineering to have a standardised approach, i.e. all EH Divisions to have the same website structure. For additional developments, EHTas has secured the services of post-grad IT students needing work experience, to build some applications for the website. EHWA and EHTas work together on these projects.

The current project is to get a downloadable form built, which will allow any member to collect details of a place of interest and send it to the website administrator. The material on the form can be reviewed, transferred to a pre-coded template/table and then uploaded to the website. The aim is to minimise coding and to speed up loading of material.

Archives:

A project has been ongoing for a few months to digitise the Division's archives/library – all 48 archive boxes! It is expected that most of the work will be finished within the next few weeks. The task will then be to create a keyword search function as well as to OCR the documents. Only a small expenditure has been incurred, this is for scanning pages larger than A3. It is the intention to share the digital library with other Division committees and avoid the need for them to duplicate any scanning.

Bob Taaffe

Australia ICOMOS/University of Canberra, Heritage Studies PhD scholarship

Australia ICOMOS and the University of Canberra have announced that the joint Australia ICOMOS/University of Canberra Heritage Studies PhD scholarship has been awarded to Kate Clark. Read more at: <https://australia.icomos.org/e-news/australia-icomos-e-mail-news-no-989/#1>

Harris Creek Railway Bridge



Harris Creek Bridge today

Bulletin No 1 briefly noted the recent inclusion in the NSW State Heritage Register of Harris Creek railway bridge. While clearly an engineered structure, it is a very humble one being of just three simple 20ft (6m) girder spans constructed of a rolled 'I' section. The real clue to its significance is seen in the simple short concrete piers which bear the embossed inscription 'G.C.C. 1917'.

The bridge was once part of a branch line from Liverpool into the Holdsworthy military area, near Liverpool. Although the railway served the Australian Army from early 1918, through the Second World War and afterwards, the section which included the bridge had a very brief useful life, functionally closed perhaps as early as 1923.

Crucially however the route across the bridge not only served the German Concentration Camp at Holdsworthy but was built by the people interned there – hence the letters embossed into the piers.

During the Great War about 7,000 ‘enemy aliens’ were interned in Australia with most eventually located at Holdsworthy. Most were ordinary Australian residents with German surnames, though there were some true prisoners- of-war, such as the crew of the commerce raider *Emden*, captured after the battle with HMAS *Sydney*. Although the title of the place has hideous connotations due to later events, internees were well treated and had a thriving community life with shops and businesses, and even built a railway of which they seem to have been proud. After the war most were deported, even if they had been in Australia for a long time and had wives and families. Transport dislocations due to the war and the influenza epidemic meant that this took a while but by 1923 the camp was closed, and the only use of the line was for reversing empty trains serving other destinations in the military area.

Other remnants of the camp do survive, notably sandstone foundations of mess buildings



The carefully formed plaque embossed into the bridge piers by its builders. The quasi Australian coat of arms design is challenging, considering that those who made it were deemed to be enemies of Australia.



Internees at work building the line.



The secure gaol for misbehaving inmates (as it survives) within the

and the intact and forbidding gaol-within-a-gaol for recalcitrant internees, but these are deep within the operational army base and are not generally publicly accessible.

The bridge is a simple engineering artefact marks a much wider subject which deserves to be included in the nation’s heritage.

Bill Phippen

Contributions needed

Do you have news, information, bright ideas, issues of concern that would interest and be helpful to others – maybe even advice about online talks? If you do, would you be willing to share, by sending them to Michael at m.clarke32@optusnet.com.au for inclusion in the next Bulletin; we have had many appreciative responses to earlier editions, but we would like more Australia-wide content.

Bill Phippen
Acting Chair, Engineering Heritage Sydney